**Language Arts – 6th Grade**

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**Curriculum Overview:**

Building on students’ already developing skills with the art of language, this course nurtures an appreciation for literature, exploration in critical thinking, and facility with sharing ideas and observations through effective writing and discussion. Students pursue their own interests through research and independent reading, while each class section investigates universal themes (courage, responsibility, and loyalty) in group reading selections. Students select from several writing venues that offer the opportunity to create an authentic relationship with a global audience. Building a more expansive vocabulary and mastering grammatical structures and conventions provide important foundations for these endeavors. A portion of this course is conducted online (in blogs and in an online classroom, [Collaborize](http://www.collaborizeclassroom.com//)) to help students gain expertise as 21st-century learners. Students also curate digital portfolios to document their growth over the course of the year.

**Texts:**

Lois Lowry, *Number the Stars*

Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*

William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

Student reading selection (TBA)

Selected poems and stories

Independent reading (selections available in classroom library)

*Wordskills,* Gold Level

*English Workshop*, First Course

**Grading:**

Quizzes, Reading Responses, and Other Short Assignments: 25%

Tests and Essays: 25%

Quarterly Projects: 25%

Class Participation and Homework: 25%

**Homework:**

Students are expected to read independently outside of school at least 90 minutes each week for the first semester; this expectation will be extended to 120 minutes each week for the second semester. Students should assume the responsibility of breaking up their reading into 15, 20, or 30-minute increments at home, rather than save all their reading for one big session at the end of the week. Assessments of independent reading are incorporated into the work of the course. In addition, students are usually assigned two online assignments in our [Collaborize](http://www.collaborizeclassroom.com//) classroom each week: (1) a guided written reflection based on conversations about their reading (and other topics) with their families; (2) “flipped” learning opportunities using materials shared online. Students may use evening study time to review new vocabulary and grammar concepts for regularly scheduled tests and quizzes.